



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Christa McAuliff Elementary School

Public School 149

**93-11 34 Avenue
Queens
NY 11372**

Principal: Marlene Gonzalez

Dates of review: May 9 - 11, 2007

Reviewer: Christine Sibley

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Christa McAuliff is an elementary school from kindergarten through grade 5 with 1061 students enrolled. The school population consists of approximately 81% Hispanic students, 13% Asian students, 5% White and 1% Black students. There are approximately 10% special needs students and a further 50% who are English language learners. The proportion of students who have recently entered the country is higher than for both similar and City schools. Students recently arrived are largely from Ecuador, Dominican Republic and Colombia. The attendance rate of 95% is higher than that of similar and City schools. The school receives Title 1 funding for 81% of students which is higher than that in similar and City schools.

Through Project Bravo, the school has established an English and Spanish dual language program in grades kindergarten through 5. This is recognized as a model program by the City and the school mentors other schools implementing dual language programs for the first time. The school is also a magnet school for business and technology and a feeder school for families in the community, providing free breakfast and lunch through out the year.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal has a thorough and detailed knowledge of her students, their families and neighborhood which drives her vision and creates a positive tone across the whole school community.
- Particular attention is paid to improving the progress of students who face significant academic and non-academic barriers to progress.
- The school re-aligns the organization of classrooms and staff to differentiate for student need and ensure students are actively engaged in their learning.
- Relationships between adults and students are caring and positive.
- The whole school community respects, understands and adheres to procedures which ensure the school runs smoothly.
- The school's effective work in engaging parents results in high levels of participation and good student attendance.
- Information from the whole school community contributes to the school's plans.
- Effective professional development has built a strong collaborative culture within the school.
- The quality of the school's dual language program is recognized as a model of good practice by the parents and the City.

What the school needs to improve

- Refine the analysis of data to disaggregate for ethnicity, gender and other sub groups identified by the school.
- Use data to systematically track the impact of initiatives and set targets for student achievement.
- Formalize the good practice that has emerged at class level in tracking students from one grade to the next.
- Formalize a system of measuring the impact of professional development.
- Consider ways of presenting the Comprehensive Education Plan to staff and parents so that the goals for school improvement are clear and concise.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a proficient school.

The principal has a clear vision for the school of high expectations for students, community involvement and collaborative practice. Staff, parents and visiting professionals acknowledge the positive impact of her leadership. She has a sound knowledge and understanding of the needs and achievements of all students. She is ably supported by her two assistant principals and instructional cabinet. They have a thorough knowledge of all classes and the progress students are making. They make good use of standardized data to monitor progress and inform instruction and recognize the need to refine and extend the use of other data. The school is flexible and quick to respond to changes in circumstances, making key changes to the organization of the school and effectively using external partnerships and support.

The school has after school, vacation and weekend activities for students and the community. There are good opportunities for students to take responsibilities beyond their classroom. There are good relationships between students and all staff. These make a positive impact on the personal development and attendance of students.

Staff are enthusiastic and eager to engage in the professional development enabling agreed targets for school improvement to be implemented effectively. They work collaboratively, trying out new ideas, adapting and supplementing class instruction and resources to improve learning. Parents hold the school in high regard and are actively encouraged to share in their child's learning.

The school has a good knowledge of its strengths and areas for development.

How well the school meets New York City's evaluation criteria

Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather data and use it to understand what each student knows and is able to do and to monitor student progress over time.

This area of the school's work is proficient

The school uses data from school sources such as reading records, writing portfolios and conference notes together with the outcomes of formal assessments from such programs as Wilson and Foundations in addition to the data from standardized City tests. This, together with structured class observations, enables the instructional cabinet to effectively monitor and review the progress of students, classes and grades at their weekly meetings.

New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Tests are used to assess students' language needs on entry and to determine appropriate groupings and interventions. Test data, supplemented by teacher assessment, are used to assess and monitor special education students ensuring that good progress is made. The school acknowledges the need to disaggregate data further to take account of gender, Hispanic sub-groups and other groups such as those who join post-kindergarten. The cabinet is undertaking training to use the Achievement Reporting Innovation System to this end.

In addition to City comparative data, the school makes effective use of Title 1, Title 3 mathematics and Teacher College programs to review progress at school, grade and student level. These inform the whole school annual review held in June and provide the evidence base for the next Comprehensive Education Plan. However, the school does not use its own data systematically to track the impact of new initiatives on all students or to set targets.

The instructional cabinet undertakes detailed analysis of student progress using a wide range and variety of data including their own observation from focused class walks. School leaders compare performance with similar schools. Following professional development for teachers, systems for tracking students' year on year are emerging but are not yet formalized.

Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use available data to understand each student's next learning step. Through collaborative planning and student and parent engagement, they set high goals for improving teaching practice and accelerating each student's learning.

This area of the school's work is proficient.

The principal and staff's detailed knowledge of the school and commitment to the continuous improvement of instruction underpins the planned improvement and setting of goals. The principal has worked to establish a school wide focus on day to day instruction, not just test outcomes. During the last three years she has introduced the Teachers' College balanced literacy, Everyday Mathematics and more recently Title 3 Mathematics which has significantly improved student progress and ensured targets are met. Plans are clear with timed and staged implementation, beginning at cabinet level and then rolling out to grades and classes.

The instructional cabinet meets regularly to review the progress of all students, classes and grades. They undertake classroom observations as well as the analysis of data such as teachers' binders, interim assessment and test scores. There is some good practice on the use of benchmarks, based on students' past achievement data. For example, the introduction of Level J in English reading as the benchmark for dual language class students to move from grade 2 to grade 3 has improved student achievements at grade 3 and above.

The principal restructured and formalized the procedures for the school based support team. She chairs the well established pupil personnel committee whose meetings have a direct focus on raising the achievement of individual students in greatest need. A schedule of attendance for collaborative team teachers further enables discussion and planning on academic and non-academic issues and improves outcomes for students. Responsibilities for actions agreed at these meetings are clear and with robust time lines. The impact of the pupil personnel committee and allied work is closely monitored by both class teachers and the cabinet. Data on student achievement is clear and accessible.

Students and parents understand the high expectations the school has for them. School expectations are that all parents engage in the end of year conferences to discuss their child's progress and goals for the next year. Parents play an active part in the life of the school, forming a parent teacher association as well as participating in the Learning Leaders scheme. This strong parent profile provides the school with an effective method of engaging a diverse range of parents. The parents appreciate the open door policy which all staff have towards them. They make good use of the workshops that the school provides to keep them up to date with new initiatives and tests. Parents are well informed

and able to discuss issues such as testing and class grouping in an informed and critical manner. The school is seeking ways in which to communicate the goals and plans in the Comprehensive Education Plan so they can be more easily understood by all members of the community.

Quality Statement 3 – Align Instruction: The school aligns its instructional activity and resources, and student engagement around its focused plans for accelerating learning for each student.

This area of the school’s work is proficient.

The school has well embedded systems to ensure that all students follow the mandated curriculum. In addition to the establishment of dual language teaching, the curriculum is supplemented by many programs to improve student progress such as focused work on mathematics and including the teaching of musical key board skills which impacted positively on student achievement.

Budgeting, scheduling and staffing decisions are based on student needs identified from data. The principal has re-aligned the school structure to make improvements for special education students, creating one mixed ability collaborative team teaching class per grade. She has also re-directed resources from pull-out strategies to push-in, providing greater continuity and supporting joint planning. These have resulted in significant improvements to the achievements of English language learners and special education students.

Teachers are fully aware of their accountability and use their time and energies flexibly to improve student progress. For example, teachers directly purchased books to improve the impact of a new English unit on student progress. Students are actively engaged in class work by a range of strategies that are being continually revisited and developed by teachers. Regular monitoring by all members of the cabinet highlights good practice and effective differentiation and teachers are asked to turnkey and model their work. This actively facilitates progress towards agreed goals.

Students know that the school will help them through difficulties, both academic and personal and have an adult to they can turn to. They are confident and enquiring. They are eager to take part in the school government, the ‘Student Tolerance Acceptance and Respect’ squad and other school initiatives.

Attendance is a high priority for the school. A wide range of embedded and self managing strategies are used to share the school’s vision and high expectations effectively with parents. Extended family holidays were identified by the school as a barrier to learning. However, the school’s effective strategies have resulted in almost all parents restricting their trips to school vacations assisting in maintaining attendance, year on year, above that of City schools.

Quality Statement 4 - Build and Align Capacity: The development of instructional leadership, staff, and capacity are aligned around the school’s collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.

This area of the school’s work is proficient.

The principal is respected for her clear focus on the needs of the students and the changes that she has made to improve the quality of instruction which has resulted in

improved student achievement, particular for English language learners and special education students. While she sets clear boundaries, her leadership style is acknowledged and appreciated as collaborative. New staff are hired who can contribute to the clear vision for the school and who show a commitment to the use of data to improve student performance.

The principal and her assistant principals make regular class visits, both as part of a planned schedule as well as informally. They use their observations to review and revise school plans, for example, highlighting issues in the teaching of mathematics that resulted in the implementation of Everyday Mathematics. Teachers use shared preparation time, grade meetings and professional development that is part of the balance literacy and Everyday Mathematics programs to disseminate good practice, visit each others' classrooms and review student achievements. This professional exchange is ably facilitated by the assistant principals. The school is aware that more meeting time for class teachers with academic intervention services, English as a second language teachers and other staff is required in order to improve student progress.

Professional development has been determined by school priorities although there is no formalized system of measuring the impact on student achievement. Teacher College training is in its third year of implementation and has now been extended to include both cluster and English as a second language push-in teachers. Class teachers are seeking to modify the program to enable greater differentiation.

At the beginning of each year the school's requirements are sent home for the parents and students to sign. Everyone is clear about the standards expected. Success in this is achieved through collaborative work and flexibility on the part of the school organization and significantly contributes to the smooth running of the school. Day to day procedures, which are regularly monitored and reviewed by the senior leadership team, are well established. They effectively promote positive student behavior and participation.

The school uses data from such interventions as Voyager to identify students for the extended day program as well as offering a wide range of opportunities to all students through such activities as author visitations and dance classes. These add significantly to student engagement and confidence.

Quality Statement 5 - Monitor and Revise: The school has built-in structures for evaluating each student's progress throughout the year, recognizing weaknesses in its improvement plans and teaching practices, and flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerated learning.

This area of the school's work is proficient.

The Comprehensive Education Plan goals are clearly identified with action plans written by groups of staff and the senior leadership team, using data gathered from whole school review and individual student progress. The action plans are objective, with responsibilities and timelines clearly outlined. Whilst they include targets for student progress these are incremental rather than directly linked to the analysis of individual student data. This impedes the measurement of the impact of strategies.

The system of monitoring and review of action plans by a range of committees is well established and enables a range of teachers to be involved, supporting effective implementation and identifying weaknesses. Comparisons of student progress within and across classrooms is part of this process. However the wide range of action plans does

not always result in teachers and parents who contributed at the initial planning stage, having a clear and concise understanding of the school's goals for improvement.

The cabinet effectively oversees the consistency of implementation and takes action to amend and adapt plans during the year to ensure that objectives are met and that the final outcomes are used to determine subsequent plans.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Christa McAuliff Elementary School (PS 149)	∅	✓	+
Quality Score		X	

Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather data and use it to understand what each student knows and is able to do and to monitor student progress over time.	∅	✓	+
1.1 The school uses available data and generates its own data to provide an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> each student, classroom, grade level, 		X	
1.2 The school uses available data and generates its own data to provide an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ethnic groups, English language learners, special education students* 		X	
1.3 The school uses available data and generates its own data to provide an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> all other categories of interest to the school* 		X	
1.4 Performance and progress are measured based on comparisons with similar schools, with the school's own past performance, and among students, classrooms, grade levels, academic subject areas, ethnic groups, and other groupings of interest within the school.		X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 1		X	

* These criteria are partially aspirational as of now because schools do not have routine access to all of this data. The NYC DOE plans to provide schools with enhanced access to the necessary data in 2007.

Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use available data to understand each student's next learning step. Through collaborative planning and student and parent engagement, they set high goals for improving teaching practice and accelerating each student's learning.	∅	✓	+
2.1 Using data, school leaders and faculty engage in a collaborative process to set demanding, objectively measurable goals for immediate and long-range improvement, and to develop plans and timeframes for reaching those goals.		X	
2.2 Goals and plans focus on the school as a whole and on each student, classroom, grade level, academic subject, and group of students whose performance or progress has been identified by the school as a particular focus area.		X	
2.3 Particular attention is given to improving the performance and progress of students in greatest need of improvement.		X	
2.4 High expectations are conveyed to students and parents/caregivers. Students and their parents/caregivers are regularly invited to provide information about each student's performance and how to improve. This information is central to setting challenging goals and developing, evaluating, and revising plans.		X	
2.5 Goals and plans for improving student performance and progress drive the activity of all members of the school community: leaders, staff, students, parents, and other partners.		X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 2		X	

Quality Statement 3 – Align Instruction: The school aligns its instructional activity, resources, and student engagement around its focused plans for accelerating learning for each student.	∅	✓	+
3.1 The school selects the curriculum based on how well it aligns with or implements the mandated curriculum and on the curriculum's capacity to generate meaningful interim data about progress towards goals and to support the school's high expectations and improvement plans.		X	
3.2 Teachers are accountable for improving instruction and student outcomes. They plan and differentiate their instruction based on the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes.		X	
3.3 Budgeting decisions are driven by the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes.		X	
3.4 Staffing decisions are driven by the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes.		X	
3.5 Scheduling decisions about the use of teacher and student time are guided by the needs that emerge from examining student data and by the focused plan the school develops to improve student outcomes.		X	
3.6 Instructional programs actively engage students.		X	
3.7 Staff know and respect students and respond to their academic needs, as well as their personal needs that affect academic performance. Each student knows and trusts an adult on the staff who is concerned about him or her.			X
3.8 Student attendance and engagement are high priorities. High rates and patterns of absences trigger immediate intervention.			X
Overall score for Quality Statement 3		X	
Quality Statement 4 – Build and Align Capacity: The development of instructional leadership, staff, and capacity are aligned around the school's collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.	∅	✓	+
4.1 Leaders, faculty, and staff are selected based on their high expectations for student performance and progress and based on their commitment and capacity to use data, compare outcomes within and across classrooms and schools and develop and revise plans and methods to improve performance and progress.		X	
4.2 Professional development decisions are driven by the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes. Professional development is designed to help leaders, faculty, and staff use data, self- and peer-assessments, and collaboration with peers to achieve goals for improved school and student outcomes. Professional development and self- and peer-evaluation are aligned and overlap.		X	
4.3 The principal frequently observes classroom teaching and has a considered strategy for improving the quality of each teacher's instruction. Teachers frequently observe and support each other's classroom instruction with the goal of improving student outcomes.		X	
4.4 Planning, evaluation of results, and revision of plans takes place in teams. Leaders and faculty inform each other of their goals and results, candidly evaluate themselves and each other, and use what is learned to drive improvement.		X	
4.5 The principal is respected and has capacity to effect change.		X	
4.6 The school runs smoothly. Procedures are clear, communicated to all, and are generally followed.			X
4.7 The school aligns youth development and support services around stated academic goals. Partnerships with outside bodies are routinely used to achieve academic goals.		X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 4		X	
Quality Statement 5 – Monitor and Revise: The school has built-in structures for evaluating each student's progress throughout the year, recognizing weaknesses in its improvement plans and teaching practices, and flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.	∅	✓	+
5.1 All school plans and other interventions include frequent interim goals and diagnostic assessments of progress designed to reveal in objectively measurable ways whether the plan is being effectively implemented and reaching stated goals.		X	
5.2 Comparisons of student progress within and across classrooms and schools are used in making interim diagnostic assessments and measuring the progress of plans and interventions.		X	
5.3 Information generated by periodic assessments and diagnostic measures of progress and comparisons is used to revise plans immediately in order to reach stated goals. Interim and final goals are modified when data objectively demonstrate that revision is required.		X	
5.4 Each plan's interim and final outcomes drive successive phases of goal setting and improvement planning, and each successive phase is characterized by agile and flexible realignment of practices and resources to improve student academic outcomes.		X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 5		X	